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[TRANSLATION OF NO. 23.]

## A WORD ABOUT THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF PUKAPUKA ISLAND.

[Pukapuka (or Danger) is one of a group of three small islands, about latitude 11° S., and longitude 166° W., now forming part of the Cook Island Administration. The group lies north-east from Samoa, at about 430 miles distant therefrom. Its position will bt seen on our Sketch Chart, Vol. XX., p. 116, of this 'Journal.' In the same 'Journal,' Vol. XIII., p. 173, will be also found some brief traditions of these people, collected by the Rev. J. J. K. Hutchen, of Rarotonga, together with a short vocabulary of their dialect. The people number about 500, and are now British subjects. The original from which the following account is translated, was apparently written by one of the Rarotongan Native Missionaries to Pukapuka, and is both badly expressed and written, and, therefore, some mistakes may occur in the translation. Several Pukapuka words are indicated by italics, the meaning of which are given by the writer in Rarotongan. Several of these words are still current in New Zealand, though not in Rarotonga apparently. The part of the story about the transference of the chieftainship, is very obscure, and on that account the translation may be wrong in part. Kui's voyage to Samoa is probably historical. Kui, is usually a woman's name, but apparently here it is a man's.—EDITOR.]

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THIS is their story: It was Matariki * who made both Heaven and Earth, and he was (? represented by) a stone. He was a god,

* Matariki is the name of the Pleiades, but probably this is not intended for that constellation.

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the son of Tamaei, who came from Tonga. His mother was a *vatu*, or stone. He (Matariki) made and arranged the earth and the sea.

After a time, the earth was overwhelmed by the sea. But no one (now) is able to explain this properly, that is, the accounts of the ancients, which is due to the evil and confusion of those times. But this is what they say (of their history): He (Matariki) founded the villages, named Muriutu, Matanga, Angari-pure, Akovika, Amaunga, and Aronga. It was in these places that men grew and increased to great numbers. In those days men did not die. The *ariki* (or high chief of the island) at that time was from Muriutu, and his name was Akau-te-vaka. His period was a happy and peaceful one, no cannibalism existed, nor wars. Hence was the period of Akau-te-vaka a happy one.

Time went on, until the days of Akamora, about whose period is the following history: He was detested by his people, for he was beloved by one of his grandchildren, named Akovika, a girl. He appointed her to succeed him on his death. The duties of this girl were to clean the head of the *ariki*, and pull out his grey hairs. When she had reached womanhood, the *ariki*, Akamora, delegated to her the chieftainship through the love she showed to him. Akamora said to the girl, Akovika, "Thou must take over my chieftainship." Akovika replied, "*E ke*" (which seems to express some doubt; the translation is, "It is different"), and then she went to (? consult) her parent, named Kui, who was a chief of Angari-pure and was a (? learned, or wise) man of Pukapuka.

Kui replied to his daughter, that he would take it (? the chieftainship), which caused all the people of the land to inquire (*riri*, is the Pukapuka word, said to be the same as Rarotongan *ui*, 'to ask'; but in Maori, it is 'anger,' and this seems from what follows, to be the meaning), and they consulted as to the means to kill Kui. All men agreed to this.

Men then went forth over the surface of the land to cut off heads: and the following was the arrangement: a thousand *nikau* (coconut leaves) were to be collected; all the people were to assist. One man was found, who was very able, of great strength, and a warrior, whose name was Veru. He brought one hundred *nikau* leaves at one time. And then they proceeded to make war, by preparing spears and stones.

The *ariki* Akamora had gone to the *marae* with a single *nikau* leaf in his hand to plant it in the earth in order to give authority to the appointment of his grand-daughter to the chieftainship. The men brought all the *nikau* leaves and placed them on Akamora, none fell in any other place, all were put on the *ariki*, so that they reached up to the heavens from the surface of the earth, whilst all his people collected in their proper places in the one *marae*.

Akamora, the *ariki*, had said to his grandchild when the *nikau* were placed on him, that one more should be added, and then, "My home and

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773 539 173 my chieftainship are gone." Such were the words of the grandfather to his grandchild. When the time came for Kui to confirm the investiture of the chieftainship, all the (people of the) land made their offerings, each man with his weapon or spear. They all did the same. Then Kui did lance his spear, and stepped across the *marae* to the seaward side and there placed his weapon in the sea. The *marae* was thus pierced (? made sacred) and the *nikau* stabbed with his spear. The heavens were obscured by the *nikau*, at which all men were alarmed, for not a single weapon (or wood) remained on Akamora. He now went forth; for his authority had departed from him to his grandchild.

After all this, the daughter (of Kui) held the chieftainship, and the people said to Kui, "Go you to Samoa!" to which Kui assented, saying, "I will go!"

Kui now prepared his canoe for sea, and took on board his two children, named Tapeau-tane and Tapeau-vaine, and sailed away over the ocean. When they reached afar off, there was no food left on board on account of the length of their voyage, whilst the canoe filled with water. The parent sought some means by which to save his children, and made the outrigger of the canoe into bundles and fastened them on to the shoulders of his children. In consequence of the long time in the water and the want of food, Tapeau-vaine died. The parent rubbed noses with her and then cast her body away. The parent and Tapeau-tane still went on for many days, when starvation caused the death of the latter. The parent saluted the son and then cast his body off.

So Kui went on, whilst his body became covered with *tio* (someone has pencilled on the original, 'timber-worm.' *Tio*, in Maori, is an oyster—probably means here a barnacle) and then he fell to the bottom of the sea, and thus proceeded to the reef at Samoa.

When he reached Samoa, he went ashore and proceeded to steal from the rat-ovens of the Samoans, and then returned to the shore and remained there. The Samoans then proceeded to search for the thief who had stolen food from their rat-ovens. After a time a young girl went down to the sea-shore, where she found an object there; she turned it over, when the breath came out of its belly, at which she was frightened, and returned to tell the people of the land to come and see the object. All the people came down, when they seized the object, took it up and cooked it in an oven, thus died Kui. But his spirit survived, and it then made war on Samoa, killing a lot of people. After this the spirit of Kui returned and reported to all his family at Pukapuka what had happened at Samoa, and that its body had been cooked in an oven.

That is all of that story.